

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 26, 2003. Claims 1-72 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 31, 32, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 48-51 and 58 being in independent form. Claims 1, 18, 37, 40, 41 and 58 have been amended. It is submitted that no new matter has been added and no new issues have been raised by the present Amendment.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15-19, 32, 34, 36, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55 and 57 are allowed and that claims 14, 24-26, 38, 39, 54, 63-65, 71 and 72 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to be in independent form.

Claim 18 was objected to for formal matters. Without conceding the propriety of this objection, claim 18 has been carefully reviewed and amended to attend to these formal matters which are not related to patentability issues. Withdrawal of the objection to claim 18 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 20-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,121,170 to Bannai et al. Claims 1, 2, 10, 12, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 40-42, 50, 52, 56, 58-62, 67, 69 and 70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious from U.S. Patent 6,179,419 to Rasmussen et al. in view of Bannai et al. Claims 4, 6, 44 and 46 were rejected under Section 103(a) as allegedly obvious from Rasmussen et al. in view of Bannai et al. and further in view of Japanese document JP10264047 to Munakata. Claims 8, 29, 48 and 68 were rejected under Section 103(a) as allegedly obvious from Rasmussen in view of Bannai et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,530,535 to Matsuoka. Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and

respectfully submit the rejected independent claims are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 relates to a recording-medium conveying device conveying a recording medium to an image recording part, the recording medium being separated and fed from a recording-medium feeding device, the recording-medium conveying device comprising a conveying belt wound around a driving roller and a driven roller so as to convey the recording medium to the image recording part, the conveying belt having an insulating layer formed at at least a side contacting the recording medium and a belt charging unit provided in contact with the conveying belt and in a vicinity of a separating unit so as to charge the conveying belt with a positive charge and a negative charge alternately in a moving direction of the conveying belt by applying an AC bias to the conveying belt.

Providing the belt charging unit in the vicinity of the separating unit provides several salient benefits including insuring that the recording sheet is stably stuck fast to the conveying belt (see page 34, lines 7-13 of the present specification.)

Bannai et al. relates to a device for transporting sheet members using an alternating voltage. As shown in Fig. 12 of Bannai et al., an AC power source 5 applies AC voltage to belt 34 via electrode 3.

However, Applicants find no teaching or suggestion in Bannai et al. of a belt charging unit provided in contact with the conveying belt and in a vicinity of a separating unit, as recited in independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants submit independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited art.

Rasmussen et al. as described in the Office Action, does not include a belt charging system. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is believed to be patentable over Rasmussen et al. and Bannai et al., each individually or in combination, for at least the same reasons described above. Independent claims 2, 10, 31, 37, 40-42 and 50 are believed to be patentable for at least similar reasons.

Matsuoka was cited as allegedly disclosing providing urethane on the driving roller.

However, Applicants submit Matsuoka provides none of the elements missing from Rasmussen et al. and Bannai et al., that would have made claims 8 and 48 obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. Accordingly, Applicants submit independent claims 8 and 48 are patentable over the cited art for at least similar reasons described above.

Independent claim 58 relates to an inkjet recording device comprising a recording head mounted on a carriage in an image recording part so as to record an image by jetting ink drops on a recording medium, a recording-medium feeding device containing the recording medium, and separating and feeding the recording medium one by one therefrom and a recording-medium conveying device including a conveying belt wound around a driving roller and a driven roller, the driving roller being connected to a ground, so as to convey the recording medium to the image recording part, the conveying belt having an insulating layer formed at a side contacting the recording medium, a belt charging unit provided opposite the driving roller at a position upstream in a revolving direction of the driving roller from a position at which the recording medium fed from the recording-medium feeding device contacts the conveying belt wound around the driving roller so as to charge the conveying belt with a positive charge and a negative charge alternately in a moving direction of the conveying belt by applying an AC bias to the conveying belt and a pressing roller provided opposite the driving roller at a

position downstream in the revolving direction of the driving roller from the belt charging unit so as to press the recording medium stuck fast to the conveying belt closely to the conveying belt and so as to press the conveying belt against the driving roller.

Rasmussen et al. was also cited as allegedly disclosing a pressing roller 44 pressing the conveying belt against the driving roller.

As understood by Applicants, in Rasmussen et al. pinch roller 44 presses media sheet 16 to an outer surface 47 of belt 32. Preferably, pinch roller 44 has a star wheel configuration which minimizes contact between pinch roller 44 and media sheet 16 (column 3, lines 47-52).

Accordingly, Applicants find no teaching or suggestion in the cited art of a pressing roller provided opposite the driving roller at a position downstream in the revolving direction of the driving roller from the belt charging unit so as to press the recording medium stuck fast to the conveying belt closely to the conveying belt and so as to press the conveying belt against the driving roller, as now recited in independent claim 58.

Accordingly, Applicants submit independent claim 58 is patentable over the cited art.


The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fees to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Entry of this amendment and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard F. Jaworski', is written over a horizontal line.

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